

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 PC-10 DRC-01 CU-04

FDRE-00 IGA-02 EB-11 /190 W
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P R 251610Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7662

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 1260

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR NG

SUBJECT: NEW GOVERNMENT CONSOLIDATES AUTHORITY

REF: NIAMEY 1212

1. SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL HAS MOVED DELIBERATELY BUT
FIRMLY SINCE SEIZING POWER APRIL 15 TO CONSOLIDATE
AUTHORITY AND TO LAY GROUND WORK FOR EMBARKING ON NEW
POLICIES AND PRIORITIES. NEW GOVERNMENT HAS GINED
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FAVORABLE REPUTATION AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS IN NIAMEY BY ITS

MODERATION, DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZATION. COL. KOUNTCHE HAS MADE GOOD USE OF MEDIA AND HE AND HIS COLLAAGUES SET ASIDE SOME TIME EVERY DAY KOR INFORMAL VISITS AND TALKS TO LOCAL SCHOOLS, MARKETS, MINISTRIES, GENDARMERIE AND MILITARY UNITS, ETC. OTHER MEMBERS OF SMC HAVE BEEN ON TOUR IN INTERIOR AND SEVERAL NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. TWIN THEMES OF SMC THAT ARMY FORCED TO TAKE ACTION BACAUSE CORRUPTION, MISMANAGEMENT AND FAVORITISM REACHED INTOLERABLE LIMITS AND THAT NEW GOVERNMENT WILL RUN HONEST, EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION PARTICULARLY RE DROUGHT RELIEF STRIKE RESPONSIVE CHORD, THOUGH THERE IS SOME SKEPTICISM REGARDING ABILITY OF SMC TO DELIVER ON LATTER.

2. SMC IN FULL CONTROL OF SITUATION LOCALLY. NEW GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN STRICT IN MAINTAINING PUBLIC ORDER AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO DISTURBANCES OTHER THAN INCIDENTS AFTERNOON APRIL 16 WHEN OVEREXUBERANT DEMONSTRATIONS BY STUDENTS LED TO MINOR PROPERTY DAMAGE. CURFEW HAS ACCORDINGLY BEEN RELAXED TO 2300 HOURS AND SHOULD BE ABOLISHED BY WEEK'S END. PRICES HAVE REMAINED AT PRE-COUP LEVELS AND THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF HOARDING OR SHORTAGES. MINISTRIES AND SERVICES ARE FUNCTIONING AGAIN UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP. THERE IS ALREADY NOTICEABLY LESS ABSENTEEISM AND TARDINESS, AS CIVIL SERVANTS RESPOND TO MILITARY'S THREATS OF DISMISSAL IF ATTITUDES AND PERFORMANCE DO NOT IMPROVE. GENERAL POPULATION HAS ACCEPTED CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT WITH VARIOUS DEGREES OF ENTHUSIASM OR WITH QUIET ACQUIESCENCE.

3. CORRUPTION ISSUE SEEMS A SURE WINNER AND MAIN PROBLEM FOR SMC COULD BE WHERE TO DRAW LINE. IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED THAT MADAME DIORI, HER ASSOCIATES AND SOME OF THE MINISTERS ABUSED POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY AND AMASSED WEALTH ILLEGALLY AND OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO ACCEPTED MORES OF NIGERIEN SOCIETY. NEWS OF MADAME DIORI'S DEATH WAS SHOCK TO MOST PEOPLE IN NIAMEY BUT THERE WERE FEW TEARS SHED. THERE IS CERTAINLY GREAT SATIFACTION AMONG CIVIL

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SERVANTS AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY THAT PRESIDENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BOUBOU HAMA AND ACTING MIN INTERIOR BOUBAKAR MOUSSA BEHIND BARS. THERE REMAINS HOWEVER CONSIDERABLE RESERVOIR OF SYMPATHY FOR DIORI. IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY HONEST AND TRIED TO DO HIS BEST FOR NIGER BUT WAS ILL-SERVED BY GREED OF HIS WIFE AND CORRUPTION AND INCOMPETENCY OF HIS MINISTERS AND PARTY OFFICIALS. COMMISSION SET UP TO INVESTIGATE

EVILS OF FORMER REGIME COULD VERY WELL TURN UP
INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM, NEVERTHELESS UP
TO NOW SMC LEADERSHIP HAS AVOIDED DIRECT, PERSONAL
VILIFICATION FORMER CHIEF OF STATE.

4. SMC WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT CARRY OUT PROMISE
OF EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION WITH IMMEDIATE PRIORITY
TO DROUGHT RELIEF EVEN THOUGH SUCH POLICY HAS
OVERWHELMING PUBLIC SUPPORT. ON QUESTION OF
DROUGHT RELIEF ALONE, PROBLEMS OF SUPPLY, TRANSPORT
AND DISTRIBUTION ARE ENORMOUS, WITH EVERAL ASPECTS
ESSENTIALLY BEYOND CONTROL OF NIGERIENS. COL. KOUNTCHE
AND OTHER HAVE SPOKEN ELOQUENTLY AND MOVINGLY ON
DEFICIENCIES OF FORMER REGIME IN THIS REGARD. THEY
ARE DETERMINED TO DO MUCH BETTER AND THEIR INITIAL
ACTIONS HAVE BEEN IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. IF TOP
LEADERSHIP WILLING TO CONTINUE DEVOTE SUSTAINED
ATTENTION TO RELIEF EFFORTS AND SUFFICIENT GRAIN
AND TRUCKS FROM ABROAD ARRIVE IN COUNTRY, THERE
SHOULD BE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN OPERATIONS
THIS YEAR OVER LAST DESPITE INCREASED SEVERITY
AND MAGNITUDE OF PROBLEM. WELL-RUN RELIEF
OPERATION WOULD IMMEASURABLY ENHANCE REPUTATION
OF SMC NOT ONLY IN COUNTRYSIDE BUT ALSO IN
CITIES AND ABROAD.
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